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**FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE**


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*Asian Rebirth*

"The Emergence of Central Asia" by Graham E. Fuller, in *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1990), 2400 N St. N.W. Washington, D.C. 20037.

The rebirth of Central Europe has distracted attention from another rebirth of great importance: that of Central Asia.

Fuller, a political scientist at the RAND Corporation, believes that the 50 million Muslims of Soviet Central Asia "will soon be reentering the broader Muslim world, creating an entire new calculus of Muslim power and regional blocs." Genuine autonomy for the Soviet Central Asian Republics—Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Tajikistan, Turkmenia, and Uzbekistan—is a distinct possibility in the near future. Even complete independence is possible.

The struggle to shape this new Central Asia is already under way. For Mikhail Gorbachev, the key concern is to keep Islamic fundamentalism under wraps, and failing that, "to avoid the creation of a hostile Muslim belt south of the Slavic world." To do so, he must gain the cooperation of the three other historic powers in the re-

gion: Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey.

Fuller credits Gorbachev with "extraordinary skill" so far. By pulling Soviet troops out of Afghanistan, he has changed all the equations. His ally, Afghan President Najibullah, has survived in power longer than expected; his enemy, the United States, no longer has a strong incentive to back fundamentalist *mujahdeen* guerrillas. Ultimately, Gorbachev needs only a political settlement that excludes the radical fundamentalists in Afghanistan, and Washington now has every reason to go along.

Meanwhile, Gorbachev has improved relations with Iran. And, Fuller writes, "Tehran has come to believe that a military victory in Afghanistan, especially now that Soviet troops have left, would really amount to an American- and Saudi-backed victory." (Especially since Shiite groups have been largely excluded from the rebel

*After Gorbachev*

Does 1789 provide the best analogy for understanding the events of 1989? Or does 1848? In *Foreign Affairs* (No. 1, 1990), Yale historian Michael Howard suggests an analogy of more recent vintage.

*In 1919 President Woodrow Wilson visited Europe and was hailed by ecstatic crowds in London, Rome, and Paris as a peacemaker, a statesman whose vision and wisdom had ended a terrible war and now promised perpetual peace. No less well-deserved enthusiasm has greeted Mikhail Gorbachev on his visits to the West; but as with Wilson, support for him at home is muted and his domestic problems accumulate. The question insistently presents itself: Whatever his own transcendent abilities and undeniable goodwill, can Gorbachev bring his own country with him? Or will the new European order he is trying to build collapse as did Woodrow Wil-*

*son's, for lack of the essential support that his own country alone can provide?*

*To this question 1990 will no doubt provide the answer. There may indeed be a backlash, bringing to power a tough, authoritarian regime that will put an end to both glasnost and perestroika. But authoritarian regimes, as Jeane Kirkpatrick has so frequently reminded us, are not totalitarian regimes. However brutal, a new regime could not restore the exploded ideology of Marxist-Leninism. . . . A post-Gorbachev Soviet Union, like the post-Wilsonian United States, might relapse for a time into self-absorbed isolation. . . . The West could live with that outcome. Our relations with the Soviet Union would be no worse (if no better) than those with the People's Republic of China. But that is the worst outcome that can plausibly be visualized: not agreeable, certainly, but considerably more tolerable than anything that has gone on before.*

coalition.) Furthermore, says Fuller, disquiet in the region has been a major reason for U.S. involvement; Tehran thus has strong incentives not to inflame the situation. For his part, Gorbachev says many things the Iranians like—for example, calling for the withdrawal of all foreign (that is, U.S.) forces from the Persian Gulf.

The wild card in Central Asia is Turkey.

It shares no borders with the Soviet Union and could choose to remain detached from developments there. About the only thing the United States can do, Fuller concludes, is to encourage the Turks to “think positively.” Their “democratic government, increasingly free economy, and close ties with the West present an attractive model for Soviet Muslims to emulate.”

## Two Lies About Spies

“The H-Bomb: Who Really Gave Away the Secret?” by Daniel Hirsch and William G. Mathews, *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (Jan.–Feb. 1990), 6042 S. Kimbark Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60637, and “The Limits of Manipulation: How the United States Didn’t Topple Sukarno” by H.W. Brands, in *The Journal of American History* (Dec. 1989), 112 N. Bryan St., Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

Time for some spy revisionism. One of the most dramatic espionage capers of the century never happened—and one of its most famous spies probably did more harm to his sponsor than to his victim.

First, open the file of the German-born physicist Klaus Fuchs. His confession in 1950 that he had disclosed nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union while working at Los Alamos between 1944 and '46 was one of the most traumatic events of the early Cold War. Fuchs did indeed help the Soviet Union’s atomic bomb effort, write Hirsch and Mathews, head of the Committee to Bridge the Gap and a University of California astrophysicist, respectively. But recently declassified government documents reveal that the hydrogen bomb information that Fuchs passed along to the Soviets was wrong.

Ironically, the shock of the Fuchs revelation in 1950 influenced President Harry S. Truman’s decision that year to order an all-out effort to build a hydrogen bomb. Within months, scientists at Los Alamos had discarded the old H-bomb design that Fuchs knew about and came up with an entirely new concept. That is not the end of the story. The authors contend that analysis of fallout from the first U.S. hydrogen-bomb test on October 31, 1952, probably did for the Soviet nuclear effort what Fuchs had not. (Moscow exploded its first H-bomb on November 22, 1955.)

Fifteen years after Fuchs confessed, Indonesia’s leftist President Achmed Sukarno was overthrown by General Suharto, and hundreds of thousands of Indonesian Communists and fellow-travelers were killed in the ensuing purges. It has long been whispered that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency was behind the coup, and Brands, a historian at Texas A&M, concedes that precedent and much circumstantial evidence point toward Langley, Virginia. Indeed, the CIA had backed an abortive coup in 1958 and had been badgering the Indonesian Army to move against Sukarno.

But, Brands says, “by the summer of



Released in 1959 after nine years in prison, Fuchs was welcomed to East Germany by his nephew. He died a much-honored man in 1988.